

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. You are absolutely correct, Mr. KING. That is exactly what has happened. That is what has happened over and over again. And I want to remind the gentleman from Iowa, my dear friend, that over and over again, we see these bills come to the floor with what is called a closed rule. Now we know here in the House what that means. That means we cannot amend the bill. They will not accept our amendments. They have their bills shoved down the throats of the American people. That is the reason I'm calling what is going on here a steamroller of socialism. That is being shoved down the throats of the American people and strangling the American economy.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Am I hearing that the Speaker of the House of the Representatives, NANCY PELOSI, is the one who has the power and does decide what will be voted on on the floor of the House of Representatives, and the people of America have no access to being able to know what your position is or what the position is of Democrats and Republicans because it is being blocked by the Speaker and by the Rules Committee? That is how I understand that.

And I would yield to the gentleman from Texas to clarify that point.

Mr. CARTER. Let me make this very clear. The Rules Committee is the Speaker's committee. The Speaker decides who is on the Rules Committee. So this Rules Committee is an arm of the Speaker's committee. Like one of my Democratic colleagues who went before the Rules Committee said just the other day, he was sort of nervous until he went in and he counted one, two, three, four, five, six; one, two, three, four, oh, I think I'm going to win because there are six Democrats and four Republicans. But the Speaker chooses that committee. They answer to the Speaker. And the chairman is set by the Speaker.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Reclaiming my time, I would make also three additional points to this process.

Mr. Speaker, the American people don't care about process. But I'm about to address process again. It has been raised by the gentleman from Georgia and addressed by the gentleman from Texas. And I will say this, that not only do we have a Rules Committee that decides what the American people get to know about the opinions by recorded vote here on the floor of the House of Representatives, because no matter what kind of logical improvement that may come to perfect legislation from the minds and hearts of the American people, as brought through the minds and hearts of their elected representatives, if the Speaker's Rules Committee doesn't think it is a good idea for that debate to take place, let alone the vote to take place, it will not happen, Mr. Speaker. That is what happens here in the House of Representatives. It is a distorted process. And the rules regulate how much, what is going

to be heard, what is going to be debated and what is going to be voted on here on the floor of the House of Representatives. And so I think that that is an educational process that needs to take place. And as I have gone before the Rules Committee, and I have found out that no matter how good my idea is, I actually have come down to the floor here and into the RECORD, it is a matter of record, I have said that we need to get television cameras up there so at least the American people can see the behavior of the Rules Committee carte blanche wiping out good idea after good idea.

Additionally, it isn't just the Rules Committee. It is the full committee process. And I can think of three occasions, Mr. Speaker, where the committee chair has either allowed his staff, or directed his staff, to change a bill after it passed out of committee to go to the floor. And I can think of the case of the stimulus package where there was a 12-hour markup in Energy and Commerce, the ranking member, former chairman, JOE BARTON, was livid that they spent 12 hours marking up, writing, trying to amend and seeking to perfect legislation that was the stimulus package that was initiated at the request of the President, having seen that bill finally pass out of the Energy and Commerce Committee and come to the Rules Committee and come to this floor in a different form, the committee had no say in the end. It was a mock markup in Energy and Commerce.

Subsequent to that, the bankruptcy bill came out of the Judiciary Committee, where I sit and where Judge CARTER and I used to sit arm to arm. I offered an amendment that would set up special provisions for people who went bankrupt because of their house mortgages. I offered an amendment that would have exempted those who have fraudulently misrepresented their income, their assets or the appraisal of the property. It would have exempted them from relief under the bankruptcy bill. That amendment was passed in the Judiciary Committee by a vote of 21-3. After the bill passed out of the Judiciary Committee, the language was changed before it came to the floor.

Then just a little over 1 week ago, on the Financial Services Committee, there was an amendment offered by MICHELE BACHMANN of Minnesota. I think she is Minnesota Number 5. And that amendment would have exempted any proceeds of the bill from going to ACORN, an organization that had been indicted and was under investigation by the Federal Government for election fraud. And that amendment passed unanimously out of the Financial Services Committee. It should have come to the floor as part of the bill. It was totally changed, I believe, at the direction of the chairman of the Financial Services Committee to limit it to only those companies that had been actually convicted of fraud, not those that had admitted to fraudulently filing over 400,000 voter registration forms.

This process is corrupted, Mr. Speaker, and it is because the process doesn't work. If it can change after it comes out of the committee, if it can change out of the Energy and Commerce Committee, if it can change out of the Judiciary Committee, if it can be changed at the direction of the chairman out of the Financial Services Committee, and if the Rules Committee can decide and the Speaker can direct them to decide what comes to this floor, then the American people don't even have the benefit of the debate, let alone the opportunity to improve and perfect legislation, which is a provision by our Founding Fathers.

And I would yield to the gentleman from Georgia to reiterate my point.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Thank you, Mr. KING, for bringing this up. The American people need to understand this. And I think this is something that you made very clear. What they did is all of your hard work, and all of Energy and Commerce's hard work, was just thrown in the trash can. And who was involved in doing that? It was the leadership of this House. It was thrown in the trash can. It didn't go through the normal process, normal "order" as we call it here. It was thrown in the trash can. And something else was produced by just a very small handful of people. And we had no way of changing that, no way of amending it and no way of doing anything with it. It was shoved down our throats.

That is an oligarchy type of rule. It is a dictatorial manner of running things. And the American people need to know that that's what is going on up here. And the Republicans are offering solution after solution to all these things. The American people need to start demanding something different. It is up to the American people. Because we are in a minority, we can be here talking tonight and every night, as we are, and Mr. AKIN has been here week after week, and you too have, Mr. KING. But the American people need to stand up and say "no" to the way this business is going on up here.

Let's go back to regular order. Let's go back to having debate and being able to bring forth ideas from both sides of the aisle. But we are not allowed to do that by the leadership of this House. It is wrong. It is immoral. It needs to stop. And the American people need to demand it to be stopped.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Reclaiming my time, the gentleman from Georgia, I thank you for your statement on this matter. And I would reiterate that each of us represents somewhere between 600 and 700,000 Americans. The franchise is this, Mr. Speaker, we owe all our constituents our best effort and our best judgment. And a lot of that best judgment comes from our constituents who are tuned into those issues who funnel those ideas to us. And we need to sort those ideas, and then we need to bring them back into the process in the hearing process in the subcommittee and in the full committee markup process and in the